

STATEMENT OF THE MAJORITY
OF THE
Grand Council of the Tammany Society

OR,

COLUMBIAN ORDER,

IN REPLY TO A PROTEST OF THE MINORITY;

ALSO THE

ADDRESSES AND RESOLUTIONS

OF THE

GRAND COUNCIL, ADOPTED FEBRUARY 14, 1857,

RELATIVE TO THE

POLITICAL USE OF TAMMANY HALL.

WITH AN

A P P E N D I X ,

CONTAINING THE OPINION OF COUNSEL, AND A STATEMENT

OF

JOHN Y. SAVAGE, JR.,

ON BEHALF OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICAN COMMITTEE, OF WHICH HE IS
TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN.

NEW YORK:

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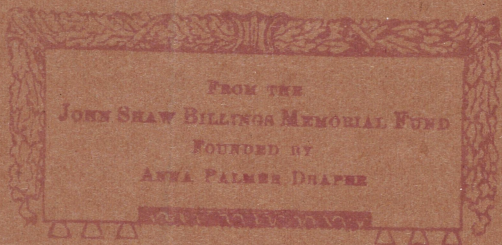
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STATEMENT.

BROTHERS OF THE TAMMANY SOCIETY, OR COLUMBIAN ORDER :—

It has recently been necessary for the Grand Council of our Society to determine what General Committee should occupy Tammany Hall. The duty of deciding questions of that kind is at all times an unpleasant one. In the instance referred to, the Grand Council would have been glad if the occasion for their action had been wanting ; and they would cheerfully have withheld action if the requirements of duty had permitted. Obligated to consider the matter, they have treated it with calmness and impartiality ; and they rejoice that their final action excludes no Democrat from Tammany Hall, but invites *all* to meet there, though upon a common basis of equality and justice.

Under such circumstances, the undersigned have read with regret, to use no stronger expression, a so-called protest, signed by a minority of the Council ; a document never presented at any meeting of that body, nor of our Society ; but which, from its appearance only in the newspapers, must be regarded as an appeal, not to those empowered to pass upon our action, but to the public at large. Justice to ourselves and to you, requires that we should notice some of its statements ; which we will endeavor to do, with more moderation than the minority have been able to command, and with a sense of the serious importance of the questions involved, which they seem entirely to want. And we hope that you will not suffer your minds to be wearied by the mass of words in that document,

but will carefully consider the points involved ; and for that purpose we proceed to a brief review of it.

1. The Tammany Society is of greater age than the existence of any Democratic Republican General Committee in this city. Before that Committee was instituted, our Society was recognized by the party of Jefferson, as the local centre and stronghold of the partizans of their faith. Under its direction, the first General Committee was organized ; and since the organization of that body, its place of meeting has been provided by the Society. As long as the election of that Committee was left to the free action of the Democracy of the several wards, the course of events was in all respects harmonious. It was only after the General Committee usurped the control of the primary elections, by the appointment of inspectors to conduct them, and such inspectors became stronger in power than the great masses of the party, that the serious dissensions of the last ten years took place. These followed as the natural result of the usurpation of the central power. Who can doubt, if the ancient rights of the masses of the Democracy are restored, and the several wards left to the uncontrolled election, under proper regulations, of their representatives, that the good old times of peace and harmony will return ?

2. The Tammany Society has not, on this occasion, nor has it ever assumed to have, the power to select a General Committee for the Democracy of this city. It has the power to say what General Committee may occupy Tammany Hall, and the unavoidable exercise of that power on previous occasions, has incidentally exerted an influence in the formation of the General Committee. The so-called protest admits that the General Committee of 1850, originated in the action of the Grand Council of our Society ; and that every organization since, claiming to be a General Committee, founds that claim upon an alleged succession to that General Committee of 1850. So now, the Grand Council merely claim the power, which they can maintain, to decide who may occupy Tammany Hall. The selection of the persons to compose the Committee, rests with the Democratic voters of the several wards. With them we are content to leave it ; and with their action we shall be entirely satisfied.

3. The signers of the minority document seem to fancy themselves political Samsons, and to imagine that, if they cannot rule in the

"Old Wigwam," they can at least pull it down. They recklessly declare that our Society does not now control Tammany Hall, but that the lessees holds it at his absolute disposal. They are either needlessly alarmed or shamefully false. The pillars of our political temple rest only upon the solid rock of Democracy; and its possession can be maintained against traitors within, as well as foes without. If the lessees shall undertake to disregard the action of the Grand Council, he will be taught that Tammany Hall belongs to the Tammany Society, and to it alone; and that the ancient principles of law, which give to the owner the control of his own house, have not yet lost their validity. The Grand Council will vindicate the rights of the Society by all the means which the law amply provides.

4. The fact that an effort is made by a few members of our Society, in their so-called protest, to show that the Society has lost control of Tammany Hall, and the pretences urged in support thereof, are strong points in vindication of the action of the Grand Council. If the lessees had now been permitted to allow certain men to form themselves into a body claiming to be the General Committee, and give them exclusive possession of Tammany Hall, and to deny admission to another organization claiming to be the General Committee, without any consultation with the Grand Council, it is clear that the claim of power which has now been made in his behalf, would, if renewed in future years, be greatly strengthened by such precedents. The signers of the so-called protest, to use its language, now "pause in consternation" through fear that Gen. Webb or General Houston may be permitted by the lessees to seize the "Old Wigwam;" and in the paroxysm of their fright lest the "traditionary repute of Tammany Hall trembles on his nod," they yield the whole power to the lessees. How much greater would be the trepidation of such men, in future years, if the Grand Council had now yielded to the attempted usurpation of the lessees. But we deny that the lessees, or any other men, are the dictors of the Democratic party, and therefore we did not yield. It is the duty of the Council, and not of the lessees, to decide who may occupy Tammany Hall; and we have not been faithless to our trust. In addition to our official obligations, we were impelled to action by our love for the Democratic party. If the lessees had been permitted to drive away a Democratic organization from Tammany

Hall, they would doubtless have met elsewhere, and the party been divided; by our action, all are invited to remain. If any leave, it will be of choice, and not of compulsion; because they desire to divide, and not because they are refused an opportunity to unite.

5. The imputations made in the so-called protest against the legal power of the Grand Council are baseless pretences. The power has been too frequently vindicated, and rests in too clear a right, to require its discussion, until at least the action of the lessee demands it, when it will be addressed to a more appropriate tribunal. The lessee has always heretofore obeyed the directions of the Council, and no evidence has been presented that he means to do otherwise on this occasion; but, on the contrary, he has yielded to its authority.

6. There is an attempt throughout the minority document, to attribute the action of the majority of the Grand Council to personal views, and to represent them as identified in interest with the organization of which Mr. Savage is Chairman *pro tem*. On the contrary, only one of the undersigned is a member of that organization exclusively, another one is a member of the organization of which Mr. Small is Chairman, and a third is upon the rolls of both organizations, and has an undisputed right, which he has never exercised, to sit in either. The other four of us are not members of either organization. But with the minority, the case is different. Of the three first signers of the so-called protest, which three are understood to be the only ones taking an active part in the matter, two are members of the organization of which Mr. Small is Chairman, and none of them are members of the other.

7. Equally futile and fatuous is the attempt of the minority to identify the action of the Grand Council with the Mayoralty contest of last fall. When it is remembered, on the one hand, that one of the signers of the so-called protest was a member of the Convention which nominated Mr. Libby; and that another of the signers declared, in a published communication, that he intended to vote for "an honest man for Mayor, instead of sustaining the Honorable Fernando Wood," whose supporters, he further declared, had "strangely fallen into the error of mistaking a pirate for a Puritan;" and, on the other hand, that one of the undersigned was the

president of the meeting which ratified the nomination of the present Mayor, the absurdity of such an attempt on the part of the minority is glaring. Much more justly might we apply the choice and strong language used in the so-called "protest" relative to Mr. Savage and his associates, to that document itself, and declare that "fiction was its basis and effrontery its characteristic."

8. Another absurd attempt of the minority, is to stigmatize the organization of which Mr. Savage is temporary chairman, as factitious, and as a mere pretence to furnish an occasion for the action of the Grand Council. We are satisfied that some of the delegations in the Small organization are of greater substantiality than the rival delegations in the Savage organization; and also that some of those in the latter, are of greater substantiality than their rivals in the Small organization. The only advantage which either appears to have is, that those composing the latter, by the connivance of the lessees, obtained possession of the room in which the General Committee should have organized, by going up the back stairs and forcibly excluding the others; and that those excluded were subsequently denied the use of a room by the lessee. It requires the same brazen assurance to deny that the Democracy of this city are divided into two hostile organizations, that it does to deny that the action of the Grand Council affords an opportunity for a fair and harmonious union.

9. Knowing the weakness of their case, the minority seek to shelter themselves behind the large and triumphant democratic vote in this city at the last election, and they contrast it with the comparatively small number of members constituting our Society. This is absurd. We might justly say that no persons in this city were more active in securing that vote than the members of the Tammany Society. But the truth is, that the attempt of scheming politicians to claim the ownership of that vote, or that they exerted any controlling influence in procuring it, is ridiculous. It is known to all that that vote was procured by the popularity of our national candidates and principles. Without them to sustain us in the contest, our local tickets would have been signally defeated; and those men show themselves to be the best Democrats, who seek to purify our party organization so as to retain that vote, and not those who

try to make it a cover for new frauds, which must inevitably result in the disastrous defeat of our party.

10. The minority have not the hardihood to deny or palliate the gross frauds and corruption which have disgraced the organization of the Democratic party in this city. They only say, as the apologists of abuse and corruption have ever said, this is not the time to remedy them. At some future time they promise to be valiant for reform. Well they know, that then the Democratic ranks will be marshalled against the common foe ; and that the necessity for reform will be forgotten, when our earnest Democrats look into the faces of their opponents at the hour of battle ; or, if remembered, that reform cannot then be attempted, except at the peril of defeat to the party. We say that now, when no election is pending, is the proper time. We have, therefore, offered to the Democracy of this city the opportunity for reform ; with them rests its use and its benefits.

Brothers, we submit this statement to you in the full conviction that it will meet your entire approval. We have known you long and well. In victory and defeat, we have stood side by side with most of you through long years ; and our later members are worthy of our ancient brotherhood. We have no anxiety as to the result of your action. We could not, for a single moment, so distrust you as to doubt your hearty support of the course we have taken. Let us, then, stand shoulder to shoulder in the determination that the day is past when fraud and corruption can find a stronghold in Old Tammany. Let us *now* relieve our party from such a debasing weight, and be ready, when summoned to the contest, to strike an honest, an unfettered and an effective blow, in support of the great and honest men whom the Democracy of the Union have established in the seat of national power.

ELIJAH F. PURDY,
ISAAC V. FOWLER,
THOMAS DUNLAP,

JAMES CONNER,
JOSEPH M. MARSH,
ANDRE FROMENT.

WILLIAM D. KENNEDY, *Father of the Council.*

Tammany Hall, March 3d, 1857.

ADDRESS AND RESOLUTIONS.

At a meeting of the Grand Council of the SOCIETY OF TAMMANY or Columbian Order, held on the 14th day of the Second Moon, Season of Snows, in the 68th year of the Society, at the Council Chamber of the Great Wigwam, the following Address and Resolutions were adopted and ordered to be published :—

TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLICAN ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

The Grand Council of the Tammany Society, or Columbian Order, have been required, under and in pursuance of the lease of Tammany Hall, to decide what organization shall be admitted to that building as the successor of the Democratic Republican General Committee, of which Elijah F. Purdy was chairman in the year 1842. It appears that a number of persons claiming to be the regular committee, have organized by the election of Wilson Small as Chairman, and Henry H. Morange and Samuel T. Webster as Secretaries, and have been admitted to Tammany Hall by the lessees of the building.

Other persons, also claiming to be the regular committee, have organized temporarily by the election of John Y. Savage, Jr., as Chairman, and John B. Fogerty and Andrew Smith as Secretaries, but have been prevented from effecting a permanent organization by the lessees of Tammany Hall, who have refused to admit them to that building.

Application was made on behalf of the latter organization to the lessees for a room in Tammany Hall, who refused to receive the application. It was then made to the Grand Sachem, who submitted the matter to the Grand Council, in accordance with the lease, for their decision as to the persons to be admitted to Tammany Hall as the successors of the Democratic Republican General Committee, of which Elijah F.

Purdy was Chairman in the year 1842. The Council thereupon passed a resolution, and directed the lessees to be notified thereof, prohibiting any political meetings in Tammany Hall until its further action. It also appointed a Committee to consider the matter at issue, which committee notified in writing, Messrs. Small and Savage to appear before them and present the case of their respective Committees. Mr. Savage complied with the notice of the Committee, and presented a written statement on behalf of the organization of which he is temporary Chairman ; but neither Mr. Small nor any other person on behalf of the body of which he is Chairman, appeared before the Committee. If such omission proceeds from any intention to set at naught the action of the Grand Council and defy its power, such a course can only result in disaster to those who adopt it. The Tammany Society is the undisputed owner of Tammany Hall, and the right to control the use of that building, which is inherent in its ownership, has been fully secured by the lease. This Council is determined that their action shall vindicate fully the rights and powers of the venerable Society of which they are officers ; and also prove a safe and efficient barrier against the tide of corruption and fraud which is sapping the foundations and destroying the power of the great party to which the Society has adhered during the whole period of its existence.

This double claim to the occupancy of Tammany Hall is but one of many indications of the disorganized and unhealthy condition of the Democratic party in this city. It cannot be denied that it is rent by divisions and paralyzed by wrongs fatal to its integrity, harmony and success. The causes of this deplorable state of affairs are obvious. Usurpations and frauds have been accomplished and tolerated till the strength of the party is shattered, and its members have ceased to feel confidence in each other. Of these wrongs, the most serious has been the assumption, within a few years, by the members of the General Committee of the power to perpetuate themselves or designate their successors, without regard to the will or preferences of the masses of the party ; and to this usurpation have been added other contrivances, also fraudulent in themselves, destructive in their results, and an innovation upon the usages existing at the time the lease was made.

It would be impossible to describe all the means by which the integrity of the Democratic organization in this city has been assailed.

Only the most marked and comprehensive wrongs will be pointed out, while the petty frauds by which they have been fittingly accompanied will be left unnoticed. The members of the General Committee have taken from the several wards all control over the primary elections, and have themselves appointed inspectors to hold them; and the certificates of such inspectors, returning persons previously agreed upon, have been substituted in place of the suffrages of the Democratic voters. This usurpation has been accomplished since the making of the lease, and is a fatal violation of the usages existing at that time, which has never been sanctioned by any properly chosen convention, or by any other sufficient authority. Not only was such appointment of inspectors an usurpation, but the Grand Council are convinced that the inspectors have frequently made false and fraudulent returns of the result of the primary elections, and such worthless returns have been received and recognized as of higher value than the most positive proof of the actual result. To these practices, so dishonest and demoralizing, was, at the last primary elections, added a new feature, equally unfair, and still more despotic. This was the appointment, within the General Committee, of an Executive Committee, who were empowered to appoint inspectors, in case the members of the General Committee from any ward did not agree upon persons to appoint. By this course the ordinary incentives to concession and harmony were destroyed, and the members from any ward possessing the favor of the Executive Committee, were encouraged not to agree with their colleagues, but, on the contrary, stimulated to insist upon the selection of their own nominees as inspectors, knowing that a failure to agree would be followed by their appointment through the action of the Executive Committee. It is not surprising that such unjust and dishonest contrivances have occasioned universal discontent, and seriously impaired the harmony and efficiency of the party. In truth, every species of fraud which the ingenuity of man could make available in the management of primary elections has been brought into use; and these primary assemblages of the people, which the great apostle of Democracy, in his day, regarded as the basis of our system of government, have become a common object of contempt and ridicule, not only with the masses of the Democratic party, but with the public generally.

Only one addition was needed to complete this system of trickery

and wrong, and this has recently been made. By the connivance of the lessees of Tammany Hall, a part only of the persons claiming to be members of the General Committee were admitted into the room in which that body should have organized, and other persons, also claiming to be members, were forcibly excluded. In this way the right to determine who should constitute the General Committee, was, in effect, usurped by a single individual. And those thus installed by him have availed themselves of the power so acquired, to violate the sanctity which had previously been attached by primary election managers to the certificate of inspectors, by excluding several delegations holding such certificates, who were supposed to be of independent views, and admitting in their places other persons more likely to be subservient.

The organization of which John Y. Savage, Jr., is temporary Chairman, is also tainted by the wrongful and unauthorized contrivances which have been already described. It appears to rest on substantially the same basis as the organization of which Wilson Small is Chairman, except that the latter has a seeming advantage in having been admitted by the lessees of Tammany Hall to the use of that building.

It is clear to the Grand Council that neither of these organizations can justly claim to be a committee in regular succession to the Democratic Republican General Committee, of which Elijah F. Purdy was Chairman in the year 1842. That body was chosen by an expression of the will of the Democratic electors, neither controlled nor falsified by inspectors appointed by the General Committee or any other central power. In all such substantiality of popular choice, the two organizations now claiming admission to Tammany Hall are entirely wanting. The formation of each is tainted by serious innovations upon and violations of the usages existing in 1842, either of which is amply sufficient to condemn it. The Grand Council is determined that neither shall be admitted to Tammany Hall.

It is painfully apparent to the Grand Council, that neither of the organizations claiming the use of Tammany Hall, represents the Democracy of the City of New York. Each is principally composed of the members and partisans of a particular interest; and the effect of their strife and rivalry is the distraction of the Democracy of this city by two hostile organizations. This should not be. The great

party in this city, which at the last general election braced the storm of fanaticism, and cast forty-two thousand votes for the distinguished statesman elevated by the Democracy of the nation to the highest position within their gift, should not now, at the threshold of an administration, regarded by the country as the harbinger of an era of peace and prosperity, suffer themselves to be rent into contending factions. The Democracy of this city should manifest their power and preserve their influence by a combined and solid organization, and frown down every attempt to paralyze it by internal strife and division. It was a matter of regret to disinterested Democrats that at the last general election, divisions in our ranks were so serious that some of the local candidates in this city only received about three quarters of the votes cast for the Democratic electoral ticket. It was hoped that the election of the whole of our ticket would have been followed by an earnest effort to unite all the friends of Mr. Buchanan in an unbroken phalanx, especially as it was a glaring fact that the election of our local candidates, notwithstanding the powerful aid they received from the great and commanding popularity of the national candidates, was secured only by the divisions of our adversaries. Conciliation might secure the union, harmony, and continued triumph of the Democracy. Proscription was certain to result in division and defeat. Unfortunately, the promptings of wisdom and peace have been disregarded, and an extreme, reckless, and persistent effort has been made to concentrate the organization and power of the Democracy of this city in the hands of a small number of men, evidently for the purpose of serving individual interests without regard to the general welfare. Sincerely deploring the divisions now existing, in order to avert the disastrous consequences in which they must otherwise result, the Grand Council have determined to appeal to all, of whatever faction, to cease their strife and unite their energies—in a word, to offer to every friend of the incoming Administration the olive branch of peace. They do so the more readily, in view of the fact that now, when no election is pending, is eminently the proper time for the work of peace and reorganization.

It cannot be denied that the sentiment of the vital necessity of a thorough reorganization of the Democratic party in this city, is universal among its members. The Grand Council feel neither competent nor authorized to perfect a proper and comprehensive system of

reorganization. They can properly express their emphatic condemnation of the frauds and corruptions tainting the present organizations. It is also indisputably in their power, to decide what Committee may be admitted into Tammany Hall, and, if none be entitled to admission, they may properly request the election of new Committees. The Grand Council are impelled by the necessities of the case to take this course, and in doing so they have taken care to guard the election by every guaranty of fairness and impartiality in their power. They have called upon every Democrat to unite in a primary election, to be held by inspectors in whose election each of the contending sections may participate. By this course, there will be a greater probability of securing Committees chosen by the masses of the party, and reflecting their sentiments and will. And such Committees would be more likely to be composed of active and honest workers in the Democratic cause, to the exclusion of the mercenary strikers who have too frequently been allowed to disgrace our Committees and Conventions by their presence. It would be unjust, however, to stigmatize as of this character the mass of the Democrats who have composed our political organizations, even under the present corrupt and debasing system of primary elections. The Grand Council recognize upon each of the organizations claiming admission to Tammany Hall, men whose personal characters and political services are of undoubted worth.

In providing for the election of a new General Committee, the Grand Council have designed that its existence should be temporary. They desire that such Committee should provide for a thorough reorganization of the Democratic party upon some fair, just, certain, and efficient plan; and then yield its power to a new Committee to be chosen under that plan. The Grand Council believe that the proper basis for the organization of the party is the enrollment of the active and undoubted Democrats of each Election District into a permanent association for the district, and the holding of primary Elections by the district associations. Such associations could elect delegates to Ward Committees and Conventions; which latter should elect the delegates to represent the Ward in the General Committee and City and County Conventions. Some such plan can be adopted which will avoid the evils and dangers of the present system; and it will be not only a patriotic duty and one vital to the success of the Democratic party, but also a matter of honor with the new General Com-

mittee, to perfect such a system and put it into operation. To give effect to these views, the Grand Council have adopted, the following preamble and resolutions :—

Whereas, the organization of the Democratic party is defective and corrupt to such an extent that it has been used to accomplish fraudulent nominations and other subversions of the will of the Democratic masses. And *Whereas*, no organization characterized by the usurpations and irregularities entering into the composition of those now contesting for supremacy, is entitled to admission into Tammany Hall, or to the confidence of upright and single minded Democrats. And *Whereas*, the necessities and welfare of the Democratic party, require that it should possess a strong, equitable and effective organization; therefore,

Resolved, That all the Democratic Republican electors of the several Wards of the City of New York, who at the last general election voted the Buchanan and Breckenridge electoral ticket, are requested to attend a primary election to be held on —, the — day of — next, between the hours of —, for the choice in each Ward of three Delegates to the Democratic Republican General Committee, of five delegates to the Democratic Republican Young Men's General Committee, and of a Ward Committee.

Resolved, That such primary election be held in each ward by three Inspectors of Election; one to be appointed by the five members of the ward of the organization of which Wilson Small is Chairman, or by a majority of such five members; one by the five members from the ward of the organization of which John Y. Savage, Jr., is Chairman *pro tem.*, or by a majority of such five members; and one by a Committee, of this Grand Council; and in case in any ward only two Inspectors are appointed as above prescribed, that the two so appointed may appoint a third Inspector.

Resolved, That the places for holding the primary election in each ward, be designated by the Inspectors for the ward, or by a majority of them.

Resolved, That certificates of the appointment of inspectors under the above resolutions, and of the selection of places for the primary election, be delivered to the Father of the Council, at Tammany Hall, on Monday, the second day of March next, at 12 o'clock M., and that a list of the inspectors and places of the election be published by him.

Resolved, That the inspectors in each Ward, or a majority of them, sign and deliver to the Father of the Council, a certificate stating the names of the persons elected for the Ward as members of the Democratic Republican General Committee, and the Democratic Republican Young Men's General Committee and as a Ward Committee.

Resolved, That it is the desire of this Grand Council, and one which they deem binding upon the General Committee to be chosen under the above resolutions, that such Committee should adopt and

put into operation, a plan for the reorganization of the Democratic party of this city, including a system of primary elections by which the preferences of the Democratic electors may be fairly expressed, without the intervention of inspectors appointed by the General Committee or any other central power; that in the judgment of this Grand Council, such reform can be thoroughly accomplished by the formation in each Election District, of an association in which the active and undoubted Democrats of the District shall be enrolled as members; which association shall elect Delegates to Ward Committees and Conventions; such Ward Committees and Conventions to elect Delegates to the General Committee, and city and county Conventions; and that the General Committee, as soon as such plan is perfected and put into operation, should provide for an immediate election of new General and Ward Committees, to take the places of those whose election is provided for by the above resolutions.

Resolved, That a Committee of three be appointed by the Father of the Council, who shall report to him on the 2d day of March next, at 12 M., the name of one person for each Ward, to act as Inspectors of the Primary Election, to be held as provided for in the preceding resolutions; and that said Committees, in conjunction with the Father of the Council, fix the time for holding the said election on or before the 15th day of March next, and that three days' notice of the same be given in two of the daily papers of this city.

WILLIAM D. KENNEDY.

EDWD. COOPER, Scribe *pro tem*.

Father of the Council.

APPENDIX.

OPINION OF COUNSEL AS TO THE RIGHTS AND POWERS

OF THE

GRAND COUNCIL

UNDER THE LEASE OF TAMMANY HALL.

We have carefully examined the lease of the building known as Tammany Hall, bearing date the twenty-seventh day of December, one thousand eight hundred and forty-two, between the Tammany Society on the one part, and Joseph W. Howard, lessee, of the other part, and are of opinion:—

1st. That it was the intention of the parties to the lease, and is its true construction, that the Democratic Republican General Committee, in succession of that of which Elijah F. Purdy was chairman at the date of the lease, and none other, should hold its meetings in Tammany Hall. And that in case one or more bodies claiming to be such General Committee shall demand the use of the Hall for their political meetings, it is the duty, and within the powers reserved in the lease, to the Council of Sachems of said Society, upon the request of the lessee or of the Grand Sachem to determine the fact, which of the claimants is the General Committee in true succession of that which Mr. Purdy was chairman in 1842; that such decision is binding and conclusive upon both parties to the lease, and that the lessee cannot disregard such decision without violating the covenants of the lease.

2d. That inasmuch as the terms of the lease contemplate that one body claiming to be the General Committee in true succession, may alone demand the use of Tammany Hall, and that the Council of Sachems may decide that it is not such General Committee, and therefore not entitled to sit in Tammany Hall, it follows that in case two organizations, each claiming to be the General Committee, demand the use of the Hall, it is entirely competent for the Council of Sachems to determine that neither is so entitled.

3d. That the right of the Council of Sachems to order a new election of the General Committee, is not a right specially recognized by the lease, but depends for its political effect upon the acquiescence of the Democracy of the city who may admit the necessity of a common arbiter to determine for the general interest of the party, the claims of conflicting organizations. In such a right the lessee has no concern, he can neither require nor object to its exercise; he must simply obey the final decision which the Council of Sachems shall pronounce.

CH. O'CONOR,
HENRY NICOLL,

ROBT. J. DILLON,
HENRY HILTON.

COMMUNICATION

FROM

JOHN Y. SAVAGE, JR., CHAIRMAN, &c.

TAMMANY HALL, *February* 12, 1857.

To the Committee appointed by the Council of Sachems of the Tammany Society, to investigate the question as to which of the two organizations claiming the use of Tammany Hall as the Democratic General Committee, is the regular Body.

GENTLEMEN :—In obedience to your notification, I appear before you to present the claims of the General Committee, of which I am temporary presiding officer, to the exclusive use of Tammany Hall, as the regular Democratic Republican General Committee of the City of New York. The organization I represent, is composed of one hundred and ten delegates, five from each ward, regularly chosen by the Democratic Electors of this city to represent them in General Committee. These Delegates, on assembling pursuant to usage at Tammany Hall, on the first Thursday of January last, to effect their organization, discovered that the regular Committee Room had been surrendered by Messrs. Howard and Brown, the lessees of the building, to another body of men, claiming to be a general Committee, and who by force prevented any other persons than those combined with them in the movement, from entering the room. Being thus forcibly deprived of their right to meet in the regularly allotted place, the Committee I represent, convened in the Reading Room of Tammany Hall, and effected an organization by my election as temporary chairman, and the selection of J. B. Fogerty, and Andrew Smith, as temporary Secretaries.

The contesting Committee, which was thus placed in possession of the Committee room, has, as I am informed, organized by electing Mr. Wilson Small, Chairman, and it is now claimed in its behalf that

it is the Regular Democratic General Committee, amongst other reasons, because its members were awarded the right to the Committee Room by Messrs. Howard and Brown.

I claim at the outset, that the Committee, of which Mr. Small is chairman, derives no advantage over the Committee I represent, by any action of the lessees of Tammany Hall.

Messrs. Howard and Brown, by the terms of their lease, are entitled to receive a compensation for the use of the Committee Rooms and that is all. Their interest in the matter is solely and simply pecuniary, and no reasonable man can for a moment, pretend to attach any importance to their action in attempting to control the organization of the Democratic Party.

I shall assume, that the Committee, of which Mr. Small is Chairman, acquires no superiority from its temporary possession of the regular place of meeting through the favoritism of Messrs. Howard and Brown, and shall proceed to address myself to the considerations which seem to me to be pertinent to the occasion, without further allusion to the motives or actions of the lessees.

In the discharge of this duty, it becomes necessary that the facts and circumstances connected with the recent so-called primary elections, as well as the more general considerations pertaining to the systematic corruptions which of late years have made inroads upon the integrity of our party organization, should be entered upon; and this I propose to do, in a spirit of inquiry and comment demanded by the exigencies of the times, and, as I firmly believe, by the condition of the Democratic party of this city.

To say that the means by which Committees and Conventions, the primary elections and the local nominations, are managed, influenced, and controlled, have become corrupt and disreputable to the last degree, is but to repeat what every man knows, and almost every man has uttered. That the stream which flows from fountains thus tainted can be pure and healthful—that the officials triumphant through fraud, venality, and violence, are likely to prove honest, faithful, and efficient—would be to expect a reversal of all natural laws. The Democratic Party, to whose principles and usages all of us claim to be firmly and conscientiously attached, cannot escape its share of responsibility for the state of things we witness in public life. If there be incapacity in one department of our Government, tyranny in another, and rascality in all, it is too often owing to the indifference, with which we as Democrats, have contemplated a growing evil, and the tardiness with which we have interposed to check it. The time, I submit, has arrived, when as Democrats, as citizens, as lovers of justice and good principles, as advocates of law and order, it becomes us to make a united effort to put an end to what all have so long deplored, yet so few have been disposed to grapple with. The occasion is opportune. Had the attempt at purification been made while we were in the midst of a struggle with our party opponents, it might be

suspected of factiousness, or stigmatized as an outburst of mere personal grievances. Now, that struggle has come to an end. The campaign has been won, and the victorious Democracy, strong in their success, owe it as a first and highest duty to purge the array of all that can disgrace and defame it.

The moment of triumph is the moment when new precautions demand the attention of the wise; and we believe that the confidence and support of thousands of the best and most patriotic of our former opponents, whom the righteousness of our cause attracted to our banners in the recent campaign, as well as that of the honest masses of our veteran Democracy, can only be retained in the future by the adoption of a just and stringent reform.

We are now in the interim between the excitement of a Presidential election and the incoming of a new Administration. Nominally, at least, the former divisions existing among those claiming to be Democrats, have disappeared; the names by which they were known have been entirely ignored, and are almost forgotten. Such a moment, and such a fortunate oblivion of the past, would seem peculiarly favorable for the recognition of an honest representation of the people in our Committees, for the rejection of unjust assumptions of leadership, and the overthrow of pretentious and bad men. Those who demand simply this, cannot be accused of selfishness or of promoting faction. At such an epoch they believe the organization can be reformed without revolution, and purified without being overturned.

I invite, for the scrutiny of your Committee, the roll of the members of the General Committee I represent. Coming before you to invoke the aid and countenance of your ancient and honorable Society, in the labor to which we have devoted ourselves, we claim to come with clean hands. In that list will be found the names of active, long-known and long-respected co-workers with you in the Democratic ranks, warmly cherishing the principles of our party, and faithful to its usages—sent by their constituents to represent them in General Committee—respectable in character among their fellow citizens; surely the motives of our associates can neither suffer impeachment, nor their demands be passed over without investigation.

The General Committee I represent, claims to be the sole and regular General Committee of the Democracy of the several wards of this city. It insists that any other body of men assuming that designation, is fraudulent, self-elected, and incompetent to act as such; and should be excluded from the building which your Council controls, as disorganizing and irregular. So far as the character of the persons who control the pretended Committee under Mr. Small has transpired, they appear to be in great part, the aiders, abettors, and participators in, or sympathizers with the corruptions of which all honest men complain; and I aver that in their present assumed capacity, they are distracting the party, perpetuating the spectacle of wrong and fraud,

and invoking upon themselves the deserved condemnation of all true and regular Democrats.

The General Committee of the Democratic party, I submit and insist, of right ought to be, and was originally intended to be, a body of men representing and elected by the Democratic partisans of the several wards, and entrusted with the details of party machinery,—such as the call of conventions, the occasional rallying of the masses in general public meeting, the printing and distribution of the ballots, the naturalization of Democratic foreigners, and the raising and expending of money for strictly party objects. It was not originated for the purpose of glorifying ambitious individuals, of becoming the tool and agent of office-holders, or of falling under the control of those who might use it for personal ends, to usurp and retain power, and manage, by trick and contrivance, to perpetuate an authority which their unpopularity would have forbidden them to preserve in a fair and honest canvass. I believe that no disinterested person can review, without his most decided disapproval, the history of the successive steps by which the General Committee has been lured into “the assumption of doubtful powers”—by which it has been sought to be converted into a close corporation, and the character of its membership lowered to its present standard, and by which it has finally come to pass that the appeal to the people at each annual election of a new Committee, has become a hollow mockery and a pretence. Should the old General Committee, at the close of its appointed term of service, simply and boldly declare itself renewed and competent to act for one more year, all men could comprehend and weigh the grievous injury of the act; but the solemn farce of going through an election, to result in the return of the identical persons, through the agency of purchaseable and packed inspectors, stuffed ballot boxes, and manufactured returns, has added insult to the injury, heaped upon us outrages too grievous to be tolerated, and disgusted all whom it could not debauch.

When to all earlier enormities and frauds was added the crowning one, of delegating the appointment of the inspectors of primary elections to an “*Executive Committee*”, thus placing at the disposal of a half dozen men, the political position—so far as they could affect it—of every other man in the party—the consummation of these outrages was reached. The Democracy of this city saw with amazement the audacity of this handful of would-be dictators, who dared attempt to seize upon the entire control of the party machinery—to set themselves up as the autocrats of Tammany Hall—and to make obedience to their behests and subservience to their dictation the tests of orthodoxy and the price of elevation.

This invention of an Executive Committee, was, certainly worthy of a great political genius. The plain operation of it is, that the executive Committee is empowered to name the Inspectors, and the inspectors to return “duly elected” (by themselves) the members of a

new General Committee. The lists of favorites are settled in advance—the certificates of return, to save trouble and prevent mistakes, are signed by the Inspectors simultaneously with the signing of the certificates of appointment of the Inspectors, by the Executive Committee. The primary Election—follows after! Its management is upon the same liberal principle. If opposition to the ticket already certified to manifests itself, the presence of the police and the impediments of unchecked ruffianism deter access to the polls: if however, it perseveres, and overpowers by votes the by-authority ticket, the police interferes and under the pretence of suppressing disturbance, removes those who are seeking a fair and independent expression of the sentiments of the People—Thus it will be seen that there is little danger of a break in the programme, and thus the most unscrupulous, unpopular, and unworthy portion of a General Committee would, if permitted, be enabled to perpetuate forever their power over the party.

It is by such practices, I aver, that the present opposition, headed by Mr. Small, as Chairman to the Committee I represent, has been set on foot. The unjust, irregular and unprecedented authority usurped by the General Committee of 1856, — which had attempted to re-elect a majority of its own members by packing and tampering with the Boards of Inspectors, — has been spurned by the party in every ward in the city.

I insist that this proceeding, as bringing from the Democratic votes a new and direct representation, and repudiating the right of the old Committee to dictate and nominate its own members as their own successors, was rendered necessary by the circumstances; and that so far from being viewed as a party revolt, it is entitled to be considered as constituting the only true and reliable popular act, and furnishing the only available basis for that reform in our party machinery so urgently desired. While the absurd and farcical elections which it is pretended were held under the restrictions, directions and revision of the majority of the old General Committee, deprived as they were of all opportunity for the manifestation of personal preferences, and presenting, in short, the mere form of regularity without the substance of Democracy, ought to be disowned and repudiated by the Democratic party, for whom the Council of Sachems holds in trust the custody of the usual halls of meeting.

To this course, we conceive, every consideration of justice and propriety invites you. On the one hand, you have before you a body of persons claiming to have been *regularly* elected as a Committee in consequence of the exercise, by a preceding General Committee, of usurped, irregular, and oppressive powers, never conferred or intended to be conferred upon it. On the other, a General Committee composed of the delegated representatives in every ward, of a legitimate and deliberate movement of the Democratic masses—a body having a constituency and relying upon it for the

support its members will endeavor to deserve. The Council of Sachems has to say which of the two, in its opinion, most correctly represents the Democracy of the Empire City, and while it surely can have no doubt upon the subject, and need not hesitate to express its convictions, it will do so with the more certainty and promptness, we are convinced, since its action cannot but be in a great degree influential upon the destiny and future success of the Democratic organization.

J. Y. SAVAGE, Jr.,

Temporary Chairman of the Democratic Republican General Committee.

